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U.S. and Indonesian Prospective Parental Intervention in Child Peer Conflict

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Poster Presentation P36

**U.S. AND INDONESIAN PROSPECTIVE PARENTAL INTERVENTION IN
CHILD PEER CONFLICT**

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Parents frequently intervene in the conflicts that children experience with other peers. The work of Ross, Hastings and their colleagues has alerted researchers to the possibility that parents engage in such intervention in part to teach children lessons. Ross and her colleagues have focused on the role of such intervention for teaching children rules about possession and property rights.

Whereas property rights might be particularly salient in cultures such as the European-American subgroups in the US that emphasize individualism and market forces, we suggest that this might be less salient in other cultures. Many of the cultural groups in Indonesia emphasize collectivism, social harmony, and communal sharing, and we hypothesize that parental intervention might focus on instilling these values.

In this study, U.S. (N=71) and Indonesian (N=64) students responded to vignettes about object conflicts between a child (assumed to be their own) and a peer. Participants were asked whether or not they would intervene in the conflict and to explain their rationale. The responses were coded with high reliability.

Analyses revealed that U.S. participants were more likely than Indonesian participants to justify their action through the use of property rules (59.9 % vs. 40.1%). Indonesian participants more frequently than US participants justified their actions by either referring to the need to stop the immediate conflict and reinstate harmony (71.0% vs. 29.0%), or the importance of teaching children about harmonious relationships and getting along with others (57.4% vs. 42.6%).

These results suggest that the messages that parents portray when they intervene in child conflict is a reflection of the values considered important in that culture. We hypothesize that conflict intervention by parents may be a mechanism for the transmission of cultural values.